



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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## **NOAA Seeks Public Comment on a Gag and Red Grouper Amendment Submitted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council** *Comment Period Ends December 27, 2011*

NOAA Fisheries Service seeks public comment on Amendment 32 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 32 to NOAA Fisheries Service for review, approval, and implementation. The Notice of Availability for public comment on this amendment published in the *Federal Register* on October 27, 2010.

### **Purpose of the Amendment 32**

Gag is overfished (population abundance is too low) and undergoing overfishing (rate of removal too high). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfished stocks be rebuilt and that overfishing be halted. Therefore, the primary purpose of Amendment 32 is to end overfishing of gag and allow the stock to rebuild to healthy levels. The amendment also addresses red grouper and shallow-water grouper management.

### **Proposed Management Measures**

Amendment 32 proposes to:

- Set a 10-year gag rebuilding plan.
- Adjust the commercial and recreational sector's annual catch limits for gag and red grouper.
- Adjust the commercial annual catch limit for shallow-water grouper.
- Set the commercial gag and shallow-water grouper quotas and the gag recreational annual catch target.
- Establish a formula-based method for setting gag and red grouper multi-use allocation for the individual fishing quota program.
- Set the recreational gag fishing season from July 1 through October 31.
- Reduce the commercial size limit to 22-inches total length to reduce discard mortality.
- Modify the gag and red grouper accountability measures.

### **Dates and Addresses**

Comments on this amendment must be received no later than **December 27, 2011**, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. Electronic copies of Amendment 32 may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>, or from NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office's Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.

You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submissions:** Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. To submit comments through the federal e-rulemaking portal: [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), click on "submit a comment", then enter "NOAA-NMFS-2011-0135" in the keyword search and click on "search". To view posted comments during the comment period, enter "NOAA-NMFS-2011-0135" in the keyword search and click on "search". You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
- **Mail:** Peter Hood, NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

Comments received through means not specified in this bulletin will not be considered.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information pertinent to Amendment 32. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the notice of availability as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

Need more information on these topics?  
Southeast Regional Office's Web page:  
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.